

a voice for women in baptist life

# Vocare

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IN MINISTRY  
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**BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY**  
*advocating • connecting • networking*

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## SACRED TRAVEL

*Join Baptist Women in Ministry as We Celebrate Our Shared Sacred Travel*

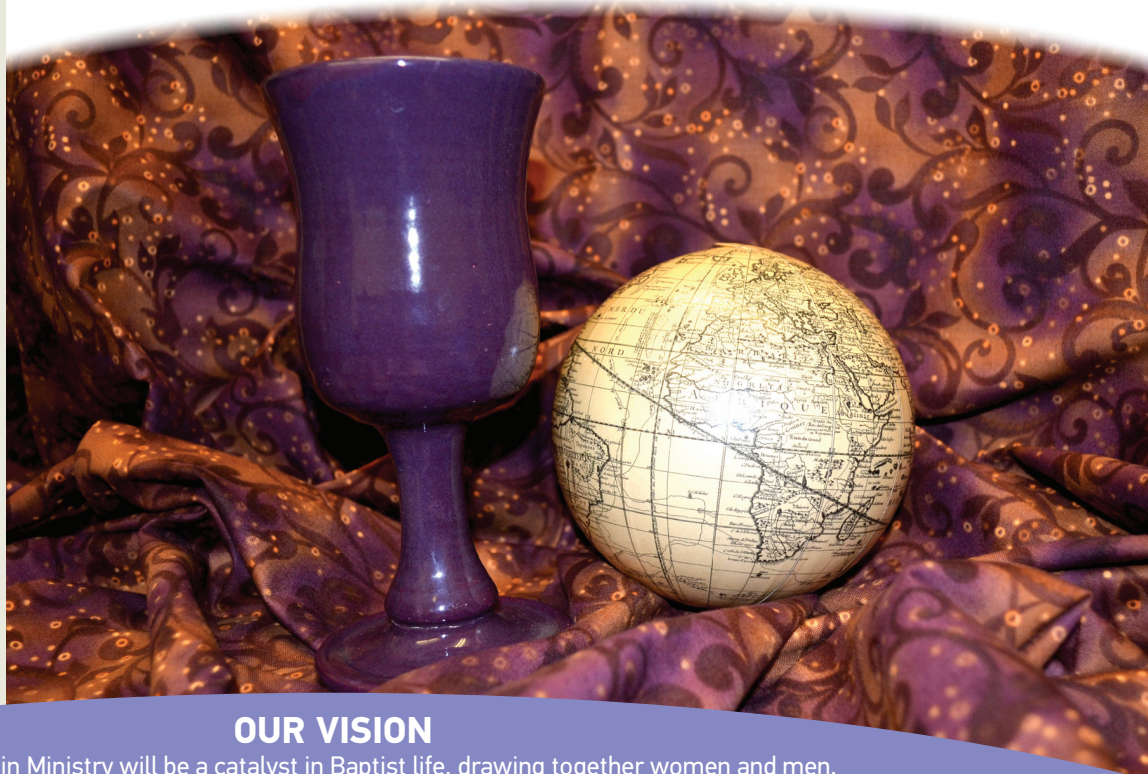
**JUNE 22, 2011**

**BAYSHORE BAPTIST CHURCH • TAMPA, FLORIDA**

**WORSHIP** at 10 a.m. • **LUNCH** at 11 a.m.

**BREAKOUT SESSION** at 1 p.m.

*To register for the lunch, visit the BWIM website (<http://www.bwim.info/events/>)*



### OUR VISION

Baptist Women in Ministry will be a catalyst in Baptist life, drawing together women and men, in partnership with God, to illuminate, advocate, and nurture the gifts and graces of women.

# YOU ARE INVITED



WORSHIP PROCLAIMER  
*Veronice Miles*



LUNCHEON SPEAKER  
*Susan Sparks*

**PLEASE JOIN US** as we gather for worship at Bayshore Baptist Church in Tampa, Florida, on Wednesday, June 22. Worship begins at 10 a.m. and will be followed by a lunch in the church's fellowship hall at 11 a.m. The cost of the lunch is \$20. After lunch, join us at 1 p.m. for "A Conversation with Susan Sparks."

The theme for our worship is "Sacred Travel," and Veronice Miles is our preacher. In 1999, Veronice received the Addie Davis Preaching Award. She is now assistant professor of homiletics and Christian education at Wake Forest University Divinity School. A native of Florida, Veronice earned degrees in psychology and counselor education from the University of Florida in Gainesville, received a Master of Divinity degree at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, and completed a doctorate of philosophy degree in Christian education and homiletics at Emory University.

An ordained Baptist minister, Veronice's experience in the academy is augmented by her ministry with local church communities and religious organizations, including serving as minister of Christian education and interim pastor at the Greater Bethany Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia.

The lunch speaker is Susan Sparks, a trial lawyer, turned standup comedian and Baptist minister. After ten years as a lawyer moonlighting as a comedian, Susan left her practice and spent two years on a solo trip around the world, including working with Mother Teresa's mission in Calcutta, climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, and driving the Alaska Highway. Upon returning home, she entered Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where she earned a Master of Divinity degree.

Susan is the pastor of Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York City. She is a featured blogger for *Psychology Today*, as well as a periodic blogger for Good Morning America and the *Huffington Post*. She is the recent recipient of an award from Intersections International for her interfaith work to promote reconciliation among diverse communities. Her new book, *Laugh Your Way to Grace: Reclaiming the Spiritual Power of Humor*, was released in May 2010.

Don't miss this opportunity for worship, conversation, and laughter! Hope to see you in Tampa!

## **SUPPORT THE WORK OF BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY**

Baptist Women in Ministry is committed to advocating for, connecting to, and networking with Baptist women in ministry and those who care about them. Your support makes a significant difference! To make a monthly contribution or a one-time gift, visit <http://www.bwim.info/support-us/> or mail a contribution to BWIM, P.O. Box 941294, Atlanta, GA 31141-1294.



*Top Photo: Tina Bailey was the MSM preacher at Gateway Community Church, Bali, Indonesia.*

*Bottom Photo: Maria Pacheco was the MSM preacher at Iglesia Bill Harrod, Dallas, Texas.*



Baptist Women in Ministry is grateful to all the churches and women preachers who participated in 2011. It is not too early to get Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching on your 2012 calendar.

## MARTHA STEARNS MARSHALL MONTH OF PREACHING SHIFTING THE CULTURE OF OUR CHURCHES

by Pam Durso

In 2011, 185 Baptist churches joined together to observe the fifth annual Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching. (See pages 4-5 for the list of participants). This yearly emphasis, sponsored by the Baptist Women in Ministry, invites churches to have a woman preach during the month of February. The Month of Preaching is named for an eighteenth-century Separate Baptist woman preacher, who preached alongside her brother and husband in Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, and the emphasis is both a celebration of women's God-given giftedness and an opportunity to educate congregations about women in ministry.

The event has grown since in 2007, when 55 churches took part in the inaugural Month of Preaching. This year's involvement far surpassed any previous year, with 78 more churches participating than last year's 107. This year churches in 20 states and the District of Columbia invited women into their pulpits to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. Churches in Cuba, Indonesia, and Uganda also participated.

Two churches had a true "Month of Women's Preaching." Both Crozet Baptist Church in Crozet, Virginia, and Commonwealth Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia, invited women to preach all four Sundays in February. (See stories on pages 6-7). Two churches invited younger members of their congregations into the pulpit. St. Johns Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, heard sermons by two teenagers, Clara Howard and Mattie Kearse, and 12-year-old Hannah Reese co-preached a sermon with her father, Kyle, at Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida.

Jessica Margrave Schirm preached in two different Kentucky churches in February: Central Baptist Church, Lexington and Lyndon Baptist Church, Louisville. Jessica is a hospice chaplain and also serves as children's coordinator at Central Baptist. Of her preaching opportunities, she wrote, "During the summer between my freshman and sophomore years of college, I served as a youth ministry intern alongside Dr. Jim Holladay, who is now pastor of Lyndon Baptist. I was just beginning to discern my call and was still very connected to my more conservative Baptist heritage. Back then I could never have imagined myself as a preacher. Now thirteen years later, I am an ordained Baptist minister, fulfilling my calling as a chaplain and church staff member. Being invited to preach at two Baptist churches for the Marsha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching, the two churches that represent my past and my present, was nothing short of an honor and a dream come true. I felt welcomed, affirmed, and supported."

Keith Herron, pastor of Holmeswood Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri, has led his church to participate annually in this emphasis, and his response following this year's MSM Sunday was "This is the obvious: I think the MSM emphasis is making a difference in shifting the culture of our churches. At Holmeswood, I've heard less and less from the old "thou shalt not" traditionalism and more and more from some even very traditional Baptists who now affirm the idea that we can be a church that encourages persons, male or female, to grow in their calling. They now see that preaching from our pulpit can be a generous way the called can stretch their gifts while we as a congregation hear a good word from God because we have ears to hear."



# MARTHA STEARNS MARSHALL MONTH OF PREACHING, 2011

AL	Birmingham	Baptist Church of the Covenant	Sarah Shelton	KY	Danville	Lexington Avenue Baptist Church	Brittany Stillwell
AL	Huntsville	First Baptist Church	Jane Hull				Krebbs
AL	Madison	Trinity Baptist Church	Colleen Burroughs	KY	Elizabethtown	Living Faith Baptist Fellowship	Tara Edwards
AL	Mobile	First Baptist Church	Laura Lemley	KY	Eminence	Eminence Baptist Church	Amber Inscore Essick
AL	Mobile	Hillcrest Baptist Church	Terri Byrd	KY	Georgetown	Baptist Seminary of Kentucky	Katerine Redmond,
AL	Montevallo	University Baptist Church	Alyssa Szymanski				Susanne Jenkens
AL	Pelham	Crosscreek Baptist Church	Terri Byrd	KY	Georgetown	Faith Baptist Church	Sara Clarke
AL	Pintala	Pintala Baptist Church	Ruth Perkins Lee	KY	Lexington	Central Baptist Church	Jessica Margrave Schirm
AL	Tuscaloosa	Woodland Forest Baptist Church	Terri Byrd	KY	Lexington	Trinity Baptist Church	Nan Riddle
AR	Little Rock	Second Baptist Church	Betsy Young	KY	Louisville	Buechel Park Baptist Church	Brittany Stillwell
AR	Little Rock	Pulaski Heights Baptist	Carolyn Staley				Krebbs
CA	San Francisco	Nineteenth Avenue Baptist Church	Joy Yee	KY	Louisville	Highland Baptist Church	Carol Collier Harston
DC	Washington	Calvary Baptist Church	Amy Butler	KY	Louisville	Lyndon Baptist Church	Jessica Margrave Schirm
DC	Washington	National Memorial Baptist Church	Kasey Jones	KY	Louisville	Broadway Baptist Church	Lindsay Comstock
FL	Jacksonville	Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church	Hannah Reese	KY	Owensboro	Third Baptist Church	Karen Thomas Smith
FL	Lakeland	Church in the Meadows	Kerri Kroeker	KY	Port Royal	Port Royal Baptist Church	Amber Inscore Essick
FL	Montecello	Ebenezer Baptist Church	Joyce Cleary	LA	Baton Rouge	University Baptist Church	Shannon Rutherford
FL	Orlando	College Park Baptist Church	Terri Byrd	MA	Newton	First Baptist Church	Linda Moore
GA	Athens	Milledge Avenue Baptist Church	Kristy Eggert,	MD	Annapolis	Broadneck Baptist Church	Abby Thornton
			Stephanie McLeskey	MD	Baltimore	Woodbrook Baptist Church	Amy Butler
GA	Atlanta	Edgewood Church	Carrie Dean	MD	Baltimore	University Baptist Church	Robin Anderson
GA	Atlanta	Northside Drive Baptist Church	Karen Massey	MD	Kensington	Kensington Baptist Church	Kim Hyekyung Ock
GA	Atlanta	Peachtree Baptist Church	Mary Kate Christian	MO	Columbia	First Baptist Church	Jeanie McGowan
GA	Augusta	First Baptist Church	Becca Jones	MO	Jefferson City	First Baptist Church	Melissa Hatfield
GA	Canton	Heritage Baptist Fellowship	Devita Parnell	MO	Kansas City	Englewood Baptist Church	Heather Entrekin
GA	Cartersville	Heritage Baptist Church	Anna Grace Jenkins,	MO	Kansas City	Holmeswood Baptist Church	Jennifer Harris Dault
			Alyssa Kautz,	MO	Kansas City	Abundant Life Church	Sarah Holloway Horn
			Maggie Fields	MO	Lee's Summit	Cornerstone Church	Teri Shipley
GA	Conyers	Trinity Baptist Church	Jan Thompson	MO	Liberty	Second Baptist Church	Christy Scarborough
GA	Covington	Immanuel Progressive Baptist Church	Avis Williams				Edwards
GA	Decatur	Scott Blvd. Baptist Church	Ellen Gardner Cook	MO	Liberty	South Liberty Baptist Church	Kathy Pickett
GA	Decatur	First Baptist Church	Julie Pennington-	MO	St. Louis	Delmar Baptist Church	Andrea Missey
			Russell	MO	St. Louis	Southwest Baptist Church	Jeanie McGowan
GA	Devereux	Beulah Baptist Church	Jacque Thompson	MO	St. Louis	Webster Grove Baptist	Judy Holstein
			Burkhart	MO	St. Louis	Third Baptist Church	Leslie Limbaugh
GA	Fayetteville	National Heights Baptist Church	Robin North	MO	Sweet Springs	First Baptist Church	Karen Sherin
GA	Fitzgerald	First Baptist Church	Sarah Holik	MS	Columbus	New Baptist Temple	Amanda Ducksworth
GA	Grayson	Cornerstone Church	Devita Parnell	MS	Starkville	University Baptist Church	Morgan Darsey
GA	Griffin	First Baptist Church	Denel James	NC	Ahoskie	First Baptist Church	Tammi Ward
GA	Haddock	Haddock Baptist Church	Sharon McClung,	NC	Angier	Neill's Creek Baptist Church	Cindy Bolden
			Cathy Martin	NC	Brevard	Mount Moriah Calvert Baptist Church	Brenda Jones
GA	Jefferson	First Baptist Church	Erica Cooper	NC	Buies Creek	Memorial Baptist Church	Jenny Folmar
GA	Milledgeville	Community Baptist Church	Laura Wheeler	NC	Candler	Hominy Baptist Church	Kathy Vestal
GA	Newnan	Central Baptist Church	Bailey Edwards	NC	Cary	Westwood Baptist Church	Lynn Turner
			Nelson	NC	Chapel Hill	HillSong Church	Heather Folliard
GA	Newnan	Iglesia Bautista El Buen Pastor	Wilma Manso	NC	Chapel Hill	Lystra Baptist Church	Jennifer Ingold Asbill
GA	Rome	North Broad Baptist Church	Meredith Shaw	NC	Chapel Hill	University Baptist Church	Sandy Kennedy
GA	Savannah	First Baptist Church	Carolyn Hale	NC	Charlotte	Park Road Baptist Church	Amy Jacks Dean
			Cubbedge	NC	Charlotte	St. Johns Baptist Church	Clara Howard,
			AnnMarie Kneebone				Mattie Kearse
IL	Chicago	Grace Baptist Church	Mary Ahn	NC	Charlotte	Sardis Baptist Church	Mandy England Cole
IL	Chicago	Agape Korean Baptist Church	Jennifer Harris Dault	NC	Concord	McGill Baptist Church	Kheresa Harmon
IL	East St. Louis	CAC Friendly Baptist Church	Susan Soric, Liz Jones	NC	Cullowhee	Culloowhee Baptist Church	Tonya Vickery
IL	Wilmette	Community Church	Angela Lowe	NC	Dunn	Westfield Baptist Church	Erin Dickert
KS	Ottawa	Tauy Baptist Church					

NC	Dunn	First Baptist Church	Lydia Hoyle	SC	Spartanburg	Fernwood Baptist Church	Lisa Wimberly Allen
NC	Durham	Watts Street Baptist Church	Diane Hill	TN	Chattanooga	First Baptist Church	Marnie Fisher-Ingram
NC	Durham	Yates Baptist Church	LeAnne Spruill Ryan	TN	Cookeville	Providence Baptist Church	Lisa Thompson
NC	Durham	Calvary Baptist Church	Lisa Cole	TN	Knoxville	West Hills Baptist Church	Pam Durso
NC	Durham	Temple Baptist Church	Peggy Davis Gold	TN	Memphis	Central Baptist Church	Felicia LaVant
NC	Durham	Tobacco Trail Church	Virginia Ross Taylor	TN	Memphis	Mt. Zion Baptist Church	Bonnie Oliver
NC	Elkin	First Baptist Church	Clare Johnson				Brandon,
NC	Gates	Reynoldson Baptist Church	Jill Awuni				Sandra Johnson
NC	Hendersonville	Providence Baptist Church	Karen Doucette	TN	Memphis	Berean Baptist Church	Patricia A. Owens
NC	Holden Beach	Brunswick Island Baptist Church	Rita Ramphal	TN	Nashville	Glendale Baptist Church	Lauren Duffie, Claire
NC	Kernersville	Union Cross Baptist Church	Erin Lysse				McKeever-Burgett
NC	Louisburg	Hickory Rock Baptist Church	Rebecca Bentley Hall	TN	Nashville	Immanuel Baptist Church	Tambi Swiney
NC	Lumberton	First Baptist Church	Bonnie Robbins Reedy	TN	Rutledge	Rutledge Baptist Church	Naomi Balch Brown
NC	Madison	First Baptist Church	Vicki Lumpkin	TX	Abilene	Crosspoint Fellowship Church	Erin James-Brown
NC	Marion	First Baptist Church	Aileen Mitchell	TX	Austin	First Baptist Church	Amy Wiles
			Lawrimore	TX	Austin	Highland Park Baptist Church	Dorisanne Cooper
NC	Marshall	First Baptist Church	Gail Coulter	TX	Dallas	Iglesia Bill Harrod	Maria Pacheco
NC	Mebane	First Baptist Church	Judy Hill Butler	TX	Dallas	Royal Lane Baptist Church	Paula D'Arcy
NC	Mt. Airy	Piney Grove Baptist Church	Rebecca Husband	TX	Houston	Willow Meadows Baptist Church	Abbie Huff
			Maynard	TX	Lubbock	Second Baptist Church	Elizabeth Abraham
NC	Pfafftown	Pfafftown Baptist Church	Diana Godwin	TX	Waco	Lake Shore Baptist Church	Carol McEntyre
NC	Raleigh	Ridge Road Baptist Church	Jeanne Cross	TX	Waco	Calvary Baptist Church	Mary Alice Birdwhistell
NC	Raleigh	Trinity Baptist Church	Karen Metcalf Eickhoff	VA	Alexandria	Commonwealth Baptist Church	Kris Beckert,
NC	Raleigh	Millbrook Baptist Church	Laura Barclay				Erika Kleiner,
NC	Raleigh	Tabernacle Baptist Church	Lydia Hoyle				Kristy Moeller,
NC	Raleigh	Pullen Memorial Baptist Church	Nancy Petty				Teresa Thames-Lynch
NC	Raleigh	Hayes Barton Baptist Church	Stacy Pardue	VA	Annadale	United Baptist Church	Twyla Turner
NC	Rocky Mount	Lakeside Baptist Church	Elizabeth Jones	VA	Crozet	Crozet Baptist Church	Katie Boykin,
			Edwards				Kendall Ratliffe,
NC	Taylorsville	First Baptist Church	Ruby Fulbright				Laura Tadlock,
NC	Wake Forest	Heritage Baptist Church	Amy Arrowood Lin				Kathy Gore Chappell
NC	Whitefield	First Baptist Church	Whitney Edwards-	VA	Farmville	Farmville Baptist Church	Sara Thompson
			Russell	VA	Independence	First Baptist Church	Melanie Storie
NC	Williamston	Memorial Baptist Church	Charity Roberson	VA	Lynnwood	Good Shepherd Baptist Church	Denise Aanenson
NC	Wilmington	Winter Park Baptist Church	Jessica Asbell	VA	Madison Heights	Madison Heights Baptist Church	Caressa Talley,
NC	Wilmington	Masonboro Baptist Church	Shirley Womble				Betty Howell
NC	Wilmington	First Baptist Church	Stefanie Riley	VA	Martinsville	Starling Avenue Baptist Church	Susan Spangenberg
NC	Winston-Salem	Knollwood Baptist Church	Shawnthea Monroe	VA	Portsmouth	Westhaven Baptist Church	Traci Bunn Powers
OK	Oklahoma City	First Baptist Church	Sarah Stewart	VA	Red Oak	Antioch Baptist Church	Jane Lyon
OK	Shawnee	University Baptist Church	Marquette Bugg	VA	Reston	Washington Plaza Baptist Church	Starlette McNeil
RI	Jamestown	Central Baptist Church	Kathryn Palen	VA	Richmond	The Tabernacle Baptist Church	Amanda Smith Miller
SC	Anderson	Boulevard Baptist Church	Cindy Dawson	VA	Richmond	Grace Baptist Church	Betty Pugh Mills
SC	Clemson	First Baptist Church	April Coates	VA	Richmond	Westover Baptist Church	Elizabeth Mangham
SC	Columbia	Belmont Baptist Church	Christina Whitehouse-				Lott
			Suggs	VA	Richmond	First Baptist Church	Lynn Turner
SC	Columbia	Emmanuel Baptist Fellowship	Irene Albritton	VA	Richmond	Trinity Baptist Church	Nancy Rock Poti
SC	Columbia	Eau Claire Baptist Church	Kelly Strum	VA	Scottsburg	Bethel Baptist Church	Tammy Lacks Moore
SC	Conway	Palmetto Missionary Baptist Church	Cheryl Adamson	VA	Troy	Crossroads Community Church	Judy DeBres
SC	Greenville	First Baptist Church	Christina Whitehouse-				
			Suggs	Cuba	Sancti Spiritus	Genesaret Baptist Church	Lauren Colwell
SC	Greenville	Augusta Road Baptist Church	Toni Pate				
SC	Greenwood	First Baptist Church	Christina Whitehouse-	Indonesia, Bali		Gateway Community Church	Tina Bailey
			Suggs				
SC	Lake View	First Baptist Church	Stephanie Patterson	Uganda, Kampala		Kampala International Church,	Trisha Miller Manarin
SC	Pendleton	First Baptist Church	Jennifer McClung			Bugolobi	
SC	Seneca	Trinity Baptist Church	Martha Ann Callahan				
SC	Spartanburg	Morningside Baptist Church	Holly Irvin,				
			Kelli Kirksey,				
			Carrie Veal Chewning				

*Kris Beckert, minister of spiritual formation at Commonwealth Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia, re-designed our BWIM logo for the MSM emphasis!*



*Top Photo: Kendall Ratliffe*

*Bottom Photo: Laura Tadlock*



# THIS IS WHAT A PREACHER LOOKS LIKE

by Colleen Swingle-Titus

Conveying how important Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching is for me is hard. I have served for over a decade in a church that has grown to welcome my voice in the pulpit. From my beginnings as a part-time youth pastor to my now serving as a co-pastor with my dear friend David Collyer, Crozet Baptist Church has worked hard at putting belief into practice. This journey has convicted us to intentionally provide teaching and preaching opportunities for women of all ages. One way our church practices their beliefs is by dedicating the entire month of February to the Marsha Stearns Marshall emphasis.

For the past two years we have invited seminary students to preach. This year our congregation heard sermons by Katie Boykin and Kendall Ratliffe, both students at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond. Our other two February preachers were Laura Tadlock and Ka'thy Gore Chappell. All four women tackled the lectionary prescribed gospel texts in Matthew 5-7. Yes, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. One guest preacher asked, "How do you expound upon the greatest sermon ever preached?" The answer—make it applicable to 2011 in only the way YOU can, and each of our preachers did that brilliantly.

Our special month-long emphasis on women in ministry did not stop with sermons by women. We also invited young women in our youth group to share the stories of various women minister pioneers. This year Megan Adams, Samantha Lowe, Noelle Pugh, and Alex Gay taught us about Martha Stearns Marshall, Molly Marshall, Mother Teresa, and Leena Lavanya (our Baptist Mother Teresa). Our church was delighted to collect a special offering in support of Leena's work in India. Last year one our offering recipients was Lindsay Comstock, who serves as a missionary in Indonesia.

The worship leadership provided in February by these eight women blessed our church greatly. Eight gifts were shared with the hundreds who joined us on those Sundays. Eight voices were heard, reaffirming our belief that churches that claim to believe in women's giftedness should put their lip-expressed beliefs into practice. We now add eight reasons to the list of why Crozet Baptist Church is committed to continue to work until there is no need for a month to be dedicated and no need of a aqua-colored t-shirt to proclaim what so many claim to already believe.

**COLLEEN SWINGLE-TITUS** is co-pastor of Crozet Baptist Church, Crozet, Virginia.



# COMMONWEALTH BAPTIST HONORS ONE OF THEIR OWN

by Ben Boswell

*Nancy Elizabeth Foil*

Commonwealth Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia, has a unique history as a Baptist church when it comes to supporting women in ministry. The 100-year-old church, which was formerly named Baptist Temple, was a Southern Baptist church that was not open to women in leadership for its first 60 years of existence. But in 1970, the church voted to ordain women as deacons. Not long after that, in 1973, Glynn R. Ford and Wayne Yawn led the deacons and the congregation to request that the Mt. Vernon Baptist Association convene an ordination council to examine Elizabeth Hutchens, who was approved and ordained to the gospel ministry by the church on April 8, 1973.

Because of these two progressive and historic decisions by the church, the groundwork was laid for the calling in 1986 of Nancy Elizabeth Foil as the church's associate pastor. A native of Louisiana, Nancy received a Master of Divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. During her time in Kentucky, she was ordained, and following seminary, Nancy served for five years as associate pastor of Bergen Baptist Church in Bergen, New Jersey. In 1986, Baptist Temple called Nancy as associate pastor.

Calling a woman for a ministry position was a significantly progressive action for a church in the 1980s, especially if she was given the title of pastor. But Nancy's vivacious personality eventually won over all her critics. During her years at Baptist Temple, Nancy was involved in many civic and ecumenical organizations and events. She served as the co-chair of the Alexandria Women of Faith and was on the Office of Human Rights steering committee. Nancy was especially passionate about working with children and youth, and she encouraged

the church's young people to promote racial reconciliation between white and black Baptist churches.

After the resignation of Mike Allen in 1996, the congregation made another historic decision by calling Nancy as their senior pastor. Some members left because of the decision to call a woman as the pastor, but the church stood by its principles and its conviction that Nancy was the person whom God had called to serve as their pastor.

Nancy's leadership of the church was unparalleled, and she was beloved by all in the congregation, which made it extraordinarily tragic when, in 1998, she was diagnosed with cancer and shortly passed away. The church deeply grieved her loss, but her memory continues to live on today as a testimony to all women who feel called by God to the gospel ministry.

Because of this unique history, the church gladly celebrated Martha Sterns Marshall Month of Preaching for two years, but in 2010, the church decided to rename their monthly celebration of women preaching to honor the late Nancy Elizabeth Foil. In February 2011, Commonwealth dedicated the entire month of February to this celebration and invited four women to preach: Erika Kleiner, Kris Beckert, Kristy Moeller, and Theresa Thames-Lynch. Nancy Foil's witness now serves a continual reminder of the church's historic support of women in ministry and of their progressive heritage as a people.

**BEN BOSWELL** is pastor of Commonwealth Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia.

# MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS IN MINISTRY FROM CUBA TO GEORGIA

by Pam Durso



*Ena Garcia and Ruth Cuellar*

In January, I received a lovely email from Ruth Cuellar, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Hispana El Buen Pastor (Hispanic Baptist Church of the Good Shepherd) in Newnan, Georgia. Ruth emailed to tell me about her church's plans for participation in the Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching. She had invited Vilma Manso to preach on February 27. Like Ruth,

Vilma is a pastor, serving Iglesia Bautista Un Nuevo Amanecer in Morrow, Georgia.

In that email, Ruth also wrote, "I wanted to share with you a special moment I had this morning. Our church is in a forty-day chain of fasting and praying to start this new year. Today is my day to fast and pray. What a gift from God that I received this morning in the mail—the book *This is What a Preacher Looks Like*. Thank you for the treasure that you make possible for us to have in our hands! I have a T-shirt and a book for Vilma. Our congregation wants to give them to her the day she comes to preach. May God bless you in all that you do."

Ruth's email warmed my heart. But her words also reminded me that our sisterhood of Baptist women ministers is much more extensive than I think or know. Our sisterhood in fact extends far beyond my imagination. Baptist women ministers are serving in hard places here in the United States, ministering in languages other than English, and meeting needs that often go unnoticed.

A couple hours later Ruth sent another email. She wrote, "Pam, I forgot to tell you that Ena Garcia also will be preaching in our church in February. She is a retired pastor from Cuba. Ena was one of the three first Baptist women pastors ordained in Cuba on January 11, 1992."

Ena's name was not new to me. In my research and writing as a Baptist historian, I have tracked the "first" ordinations of Baptist women in countries around the world, and I had read Ena Garcia's name before. I knew that in 1992 the Fraternity of Baptist Churches had ordained three women: Ena González Garcia, Clara Rodés, and Xiomara Gutiérrez Diaz. I knew that these three were the first Baptist women to be ordained in Cuba, and I knew that a delegation of ordained Baptist women from the United States traveled to Havana to participate in that ordination. Included in that delegation was Nancy Hastings Sehested, one of the founding mothers of Baptist Women in Ministry.

But I didn't know that Ena now lived in Georgia, nor did I know the rest of her story. Thankfully, Ruth's email was a beginning place for me to learn more about this remarkable woman. Ruth wrote, "Ena Garcia is a retired pastor but is active in working in and supporting the ministry of my church in Newnan and in others churches too. She is a member of my church." The historian in me got very excited. Newnan is only an hour's drive away. I could actually meet Ena. I could talk to and interview this woman who holds a place in our history as Baptists.



Just as I began plotting out a road trip I read the next line in Ruth's email: "The most important thing for me is that Ena is my mother. I am telling you all of this story because it is amazing how God connects us through time and events. No matter how distance we are from each other the Spirit of God joins us in His will, calling, and service."

While reading Ruth's words, I began to cry. Her simple words, "The most important thing for me is that Ena is my mother," touched my soul. I thought of the profound connections that these two women share. Both are called and gifted by God, and they are bound together by their love of God, their passion for service, and by their relationship as mother and daughter. No longer was meeting Ena merely a new possibility for me to do more research. I now needed to meet her and to meet Ruth. I wanted to sit with this mother and her daughter and to listen to them tell stories about how God had been at work in and through them.

I made a trip to Newnan in February. Ruth and Ena both shared stories with me. Each of them told me about their sense of calling, the hardships they have faced, and the joy they find in following Jesus. I asked all my historian questions about dates and places, and Ena listened intently, smiling while she answered in Spanish. Ruth translated her mother's answers, and together the mother and daughter remembered—they shared memories of hard times, overwhelming sadness, unimaginable joy, and the faithfulness

of God. And in the conversation, I got a glimpse into their deep love for one another and their close connection.

Ena's story is one of perseverance. As a young woman, she attended the Baptist seminary in Havana. While a student, she and the other women in her classes were sent out to the mission fields of Cuba to work. They led worship, preached, and prayed, and essentially served as pastors of small churches throughout the country. Because they were women, however, they were not allowed to lead communion, baptize, or officiate at weddings. Ena served churches throughout her years in seminary. In 1961, she married a fellow seminary student who was then serving as a pastor. Marriage did not end her pastoral work for Ena noted, "I had a calling to serve, and I never changed my status when I married."

For the next thirty years, Ena continued in her work, serving alongside her husband. She preached. She gave care to the members. She fulfilled all the duties of a minister with the exception of baptizing and serving communion. The churches in which the couple served accepted her and supported her ministry.

In the late 1980s, other churches began to question Ena's role. These churches eventually expelled from their convention her church and two other churches that supported women in ministry. This action led Ena's husband and others to form in 1990 a new Baptist convention, the Fraternity of Baptist Churches. Ena's husband became the executive secretary of the new convention, and she became the full-time senior pastor of a church.

Two years later, in 1992, Ena was ordained to the gospel ministry—after having ministered and pastored churches for thirty-five years.

In those years in which Baptist women ministers encountered hostility in Cuba, all Christians in the country dealt with an oppressive government. The country's communist leadership persecuted people of faith, including Ena's husband, who spent three years in prison.

Having grown up in the home of two pastors and having seen the sacrifices that her parents made, Ruth vowed never to be a minister, never to marry a minister. She ignored the sense of calling that was stirring in her heart and made other plans for her life. Eventually, Ruth was able to immigrate to the United States along with some other family members, and after several years she settled in Newnan, Georgia, where she finally embraced God's calling. She began a weekend ministry and established good friendships, and from this relational work, in 2000, she started a church. Iglesia Bautista Hispana El Buen Pastor is sponsored by and meets in space provided by Central Baptist Church in Newnan, and on December 4, 2010, the two congregations celebrated the tenth anniversary of El Buen Pastor.

I am thankful for the lives and good work of Ena and Ruth. I am thankful for this mother and daughter who are partners in the gospel ministry. I am thankful for the reminder they provide that God is ministering through Baptist women all across our world. Thanks be to God for Ena and Ruth!

# MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS IN MINISTRY

## A GOD OF SURPRISES

by Jane Hull



*Top Photo: Jane Hull*

*Bottom Photo: Jane and her daughter, Emily Hull McGee*



I have always known that God is a God of surprises. Never has that been more evident than it is in my life today. My own story of God's calling is one that is ever changing, ever growing, ever surprising, and a perfect example of evolution—a thirty-three-year evolution. My ministerial journey began in 1978 as I entered Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to study church music with the clear idea that I would become a minister of music.

For the past thirty-three years, however, I have lived a much different ministry life than I had planned for myself in those early days. Ministry has taken curves and detours that I could have never foreseen at the beginning. During the time I was a student, I met my future husband. When we made the decision to get married, I shared with him my desire to serve in ministry **with** him—not separately from him. This promise was a “call” just as strong as my personal call to ministry. To raise our children together in the same church was also important to me.

I must say that this decision to serve with, instead of separately from my husband, has at times created some very difficult circumstances. My ministry life has been lived during the time of changing roles for women. I have found that in most of the churches we have served, I was the first “pastor's wife” that didn't do things in the traditional way. I wanted to be a minister, but I was the “pastor's wife.” There were so many questions. How do you balance the two roles? Can a church have both a husband and wife on the same staff? In today's world, shared ministry is more common, but it was not as we began ministry in the 1980s. Each time we moved to a new place of service, I waited to see what type of ministry God had for me, and my ministry was different in every church. However, through it all, God has been by my side. Looking back, God's hand has been evident in every decision and every

place of service. I have learned through these years that I need to learn to trust God instead of myself.

So, where am I now? In February, 2007, I was co-leading a women's retreat. In a time of personal prayer, I clearly felt God speaking to me—calling me to pastoral ministry. Never in all my years of ministry had I ever considered being a pastor. But the call was too clear and too specific to ignore. So in 2011 I find myself a student at McAfee School of Theology, preparing to follow God's next call on my life. I have more questions than answers. I only know to trust that God has the answers waiting, if I will only follow the call.

Over the years I had the great privilege of being a youth minister to my own children. Now I have the blessing of seeing several of the youth I worked with going into ministry positions themselves, including my own daughter, Emily. Watching Emily as she has experienced her own calling from God has been such a joy. Since childhood she has always been open to seeing God in ways that were different from mine. Even though we are mother and daughter, she has come to her own ministry with gifts and experiences that I have never had. She ministers to all of God's people in a way that causes me to marvel. She has helped me look beyond my own understanding of how to do ministry and to be open to the new ways that God is working in our world.

As I look back over my life, I can see that God has been preparing me every step of the way. The next few years offer an exciting and scary journey. This journey is one that I'm ready to begin. What will the next stage of my ministry evolution look like? I wait for that answer with anticipation even as I eagerly watch Emily on her own journey.

**JANE HULL** is a student at McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, Georgia. She graduates in May 2011.



# LOVE STIRRED WITHIN ME

by Emily Hull McGee

I am a quadruple whammy of a preacher's kid—my father, my grandfather, my aunt, and my mother are or have been Baptist ministers. The church is as fundamental to my core as my own DNA, and I experienced a joyful upbringing in churches scattered across the Southeast, nurtured lovingly by Sunday School teachers, mission leaders, family, and friends.

But not until I had landed far from the culturally-Christian South and my church-soaked family did I feel the strangely warm tug of a call to ministry, when Love stirred within me a passion for community, inclusion, and transformation. The journey through my early 20s exposed cracks in the seams of my young evangelical faith, displayed by persistent wonderings on the “truth” of scripture, college courses on world religions and philosophy, and most profoundly, deep friendships with people who were estranged from the church, rejected, and labeled as too abominable to be allowed into the community of broken-yet-hopeful pilgrims.

The pursuit of my lifelong dreams of being an opera singer led me to Chicago for grad school in my mid 20s. No longer required to attend church (by reality or my own Baptist guilt!), my patchwork faith found a community with the delightfully irreverent singers, actors, and dancers with whom I spent the majority of my time. We didn't do Bible study together, but we **did** have expletive-laced conversations about the problem of pain at the local pub. And yet, in the midst of this life lived fully away from the familiar trappings of church or the Christian faith, I began to sense a call . . . announcing itself slowly and through circumstance, in impassioned conversations with my parents and friends about the deep chasm I saw between the steeple and the sidewalk. I realized that God's hand was threaded through my journey like the warp and the weft of a loom with two strands—the church and the world—and the beautiful, necessary, unbreakable point of tension where they meet and upon which I would stand.

Three incredibly formative, challenging, and life-giving years at Wake

Forest University School of Divinity later, God called me, loudly and persistently, to the “family business” of ministry. God called me to serve in the local church to be a voice of wholeness and welcome for the outsider, a voice of challenge and compassion for the insider. I followed that call to Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, where I serve as the minister to young adults, seeking to cultivate the same curious questions, unconventional conversations, safe spaces, and revolutionary expressions of Love for 18-35-year-olds that I too experienced along the pathways of my 20s. I am throwing myself fully into ministry, finding vocational fulfillment and meaning in this work of Love and immense blessing from the “thinking, feeling, healing community of faith” that carries me on this journey.

But this story of calling and transformation simply would not exist in any form if it were not for the blazingly courageous ministry of my mom. Throughout her marriage and ministry (the two have always walked hand-in-hand together for her), my mom has found, invited, and created space at the table for her voice to proclaim uniquely God's grace and peace. I have never known anyone more adaptable, relatable, accessible, and gifted for ministry in nearly every ministerial role imaginable! Her path was often fraught with conflict and oppression as a woman in ministry and as a preacher's wife at that! And yet because of her sacrificial trailblazing done in love, I never for a minute doubted that I **could** be a minister, that I **could** speak and serve prophetically with a distinctly feminine manner.

Along with countless others of her generation, my mom put thousands of cracks in the stained glass ceiling, gifting my contemporaries and me with possibility, with freedom, and with hope that our womanhood will be celebrated fully and freely in the life of the church. My call and hers are inextricably linked, and I relish the opportunity to stand alongside of her as God invites us both more fully into the ministry of Love.

**EMILY HULL MCGEE** is minister to young adults, Highland Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky.

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